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PRESS RELEASE

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TWO CONVICTED FOR KIDNAPING **AND ASSAULT OF BELLS POSTMASTER**

Terrell L. Harris, United States Attorney for the Western District of Tennessee, announced today the conviction of two Crockett County men for the kidnaping and assault of the Postmaster in Bells, Tennessee. **Johnathan Johnson and Richard Cole , III** were indicted on May 18, 2001 by the federal grand jury in Jackson for their role in the May 1, 2001 abduction. After guilty pleas from both men, Johnson and Cole face the following maximum penalties: Kidnaping a U.S. Postal Employee - up to life in prison and a fine of \$250,000; Forcible Assault on a U.S. Postal Employee While Engaged in Official Duties - up to 10 years in prison and a fine of \$250,000; Brandishing a Firearm During a Violent Crime - mandatory 7 year consecutive prison sentence and a fine of \$250,000.

In announcing the convictions, Harris had special praise for District Attorney General Gary Brown of the 28th Judicial District for his coordination with and assistance to federal investigators and the United States Attorney's Office. Crockett County Sheriff Troy Klyce and Bells Police Chief Islandis Smith also drew commendations from Harris for the outstanding

assistance to the United States Postal Inspector Katrina Chalmers, provided by their agencies during the investigation. AUSA Len Register prosecuted the case for the government.